Paris and the neighbouring country in case of invasion.

The number of companies formed for these two lines, of Paris to Lyons and Creil to St. Quentin, is so long as to be really surprising. I subjoin here the list of those companies, as a sort of curiosity in its way.

For the Paris to Lyons line: Ch. Laffitte and Co., L'Union, Callon, jeune; Ganneron, Lapinsonnière, Sud, Est, Decan, Messageries Royales, Ardoin-Verdeau, Chastellus, De Roulage, Maîtres de Poste, Receveurs-Généraux, Française, Des Ingenieurs, Indépendante, Des Electeurs, Des Riverains, Du Commerce.

For the Creil to St. Quentin: Cordier, Carette and Minguet, Colbert, Compagnie du Nord, Admiral Arnous, Jucherau de St. Denis, Maîtres de Poste, Compagnie de Jonction, Compagnie de l'Oise. If all these companies remain independent, the maximum of the leases of the two railways, which is fixed at forty-five years for the Paris to Lyons, and seventy-five for Creil to St. Quentin, will be very considerably reduced by their competition. But it is certain, that before the day of adjudication, "fusions," as they are designated, will be effected, and the nineteen companies for Lyons will be amalgamated into one, or perhaps two or three companies; whilst the companies for Creil to St. Quentin will become one, or at the very outside two.

Such has been the case with the Tours to Nantes, and Paris to Strasbourg companies. Those lines have to be conceded the 25th November; Saturday last night the companies desirous to obtain the lease of them, had to make themselves known to the Ministry of Public Works. Before that day, Tours to Nantes had nine companies, and Paris to Strasbourg eleven. Late on Friday, these companies became reduced to two for each line. A "fusion" annihilated the separate existence of the Nantes companies of Mackenzie, Carette-Minguet, O'Neill, Drouillard, De Raigecourt, Lefèvre, Delmarre, and the Basse Loire, leaving only the Post Horse Masters' Company independent.

A similar "fusion" of the Strasbourg companies took in the separate companies of Hinguerlot, Ganneron, Gentil et Fol, Rothschild and the Messageries, Bechet, Odiot, Arnous de Hell, Doudeauville, and Laforce, leaving only the company of Général d'Anthouard. These fusions have not been managed as they should have been. By leaving out a company for each line, the great amalgamated companies are threatened with opposition, which perhaps may become sufficiently formidable to carry away the prize. The most opposite statements are made as to the terms on which "fusions" have been effected. The truth is, that no one except two or three of the principal directors themselves know anything very *positively* about it. However, I have good authority for saying that the Strasbourg "fusion" gave more than half the shares to the companies Gentil Fol, Ganneron, and Hinguerlot, and that the other companies share the other half in various proportions. On the Nantes "fusion" the companies of O'Neill, Drouillard, Raigecourt and Lefevre, have one-half of the shares, the Mackenzie and Carette companies have nearly two-thirds of the remaining half, and the other companies the other third.

Paris, Nov. 1845

Institution of Builders' Foreman.—One of the great objects of this association is to obtain an asylum for decayed members, their widows and orphans (a most praiseworthy desire), and we sincerely hope that the master builders may be led to aid them in realizing it. Alone, they are not likely to effect the object in view for a long time to come, but with a little assistance and advice it might soon be accomplished. More good is done by leading men *to provide for themselves*, thereby inducing habits of prudence and forethought, than by doing all for them at the last moment.

Baths and Wash-houses for the Labouring Classes.—We observe there is to be a public dinner at the London Tavern, on Tuesday, Dec. 16th, to celebrate the laying of the foundation-stone of the first model establishment: the Lord Mayor will be in the chair. The proceeds will of course be applied to increase the funds for the building, and we hope in so good a cause the attendance will be numerous.

ROUND TOWERS OF IRELAND.

An investigation into the origin of these mysterious remains of a far-distant age has been going on for some years past among Irish antiquaries, and many are the theories which have been promulgated with the view of elucidating their date and meaning. Our own columns have on more than one occasion contained the speculations of intelligent correspondents, whose personal research, both into buildings and into documents, and whose appeals to facts and actual admeasurements, bore testimony to their zeal and industry.

Mr. Petrie, an Irish antiquary of good standing and repute, and who has devoted much of his time for years past to subjects kindred to the one in question, has lately published an elaborate and learned memoir on the origin and use of these structures. Our limits prevent us from even giving a summary, of the data on which he founds his deductions, so numerous are they, and so interwoven with each other; we therefore content ourselves with giving simply the *results* of his investigations, and those too in his own words.

"The towers have been all subjected to a careful examination, and their peculiarities accurately noticed; while our ancient records, and every other probable source of information, have been searched for such facts or notices as might contribute to throw light upon their history. I have even gone further: I have examined, for the purpose of comparison with the towers, not only all the vestiges of early Christian architecture remaining in Ireland, but also those of monuments of known or probable pagan origin. The results, I trust, will be found satisfactory, and will suffice to establish, beyond all reasonable doubt, the following conclusions:—

1. That the towers are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin, and were erected at various periods between the 6th and thirteenth centuries. 2. That they were designed to answer, at least, a twofold use, namely, to serve as belfries, and as keeps, or places of strength, in which the sacred utensils, books, relics, and other valuables were deposited, and into which the ecclesiastics, to whom they belonged, could retire for security in cases of sudden predatory attack. 3. That they were probably also used, when occasion required, as beacons and watch-towers.

These conclusions, which have been already advocated *separately* by many distinguished antiquaries—among whom are Molyneux, Ledwich, Pinkerton Sir Walter Scott, Montmorenci, Brewer, and Otway—will be proved by the following evidences:—

For the first conclusion, namely, that the towers are of Christian origin:—1. The towers are *never* found unconnected with ancient ecclesiastical foundations. 2. Their architectural styles exhibit no features or peculiarities not equally found in the *original* churches with which they are locally connected, when such remain. 3. On several of them Christian emblems are observable, and others display in the details a style of architecture universally acknowledged to be of Christian origin. 4. They possess, invariably, architectural features not found in any buildings in Ireland ascertained to be of pagan times.

For the second conclusion, namely, that they were intended to serve the double purpose of belfries and keeps, or castles, for the uses already specified:—1. Their architectural construction, as will appear, eminently favours this conclusion. 2. A variety of passages, extracted from our annals and other authentic documents, will prove that they were constantly applied to both these purposes.

For the third conclusion, namely, that they may have also been occasionally used as beacons and watch-towers:—1. There are some historical evidences which render such an hypothesis extremely probable. 2. The necessity which must have existed in early Christian times for such beacons and watch-towers, and the perfect fitness of the round towers to answer such purposes, will strongly support this conclusion.

These conclusions—or, at least, such of them as presume the towers to have had a Christian origin, and to have served the purpose of a belfry—will be further corroborated by the uniform and concurrent tradition of the country, and, above all, by authentic evidences, which shall be adduced relative to the erection of several of the towers, with the names and eras of their founders."—pp. 4—6.

We would refer those who desire further information on this very interesting subject, and a knowledge of the data, which led Mr. Petrie to the above conclusions, to the work itself. Incidentally, it contains much valuable information on the antiquity, and general characteristics, of Irish ecclesiastical remains (profusely illustrated); and to this we shall hereafter refer.

AWARDS OF OFFICIAL REFEREES.

TANNERS AND LEATHER-DRESSERS' DRYING SHEDS.

Mr. J. G. Hepburn addressed the referees in October last, on the part of persons carrying on business as tanners and curriers in Bermondsey, who, in erecting buildings for the purposes of their trade, had received notice that such buildings being of timber, &c., were not conformable to the Act. He submitted "that Buildings used by them for workshops or drying places, are included in Schedule B part 1 of 7 & 8 Vict. c. 84, under the words 'all other buildings exempted by any Act of Parliament from the operation of the Act passed in the 14th year of his late Majesty King George the Third, and by this Act repealed,' and that therefore they are by Section 5 exempted from the provisions of Schedule D, the grounds for this opinion are that by the 14 Geo. III. c. 78, such workshops or drying places were constituted into a class called the 7th class, and were by the same Act (Sections 20 and 21) virtually exempted from the operation of the Act, by being expressly allowed to be built of any dimensions and of any materials, whereas all the other six classes of buildings referred to in the Act, were expressly restricted and limited as to their dimensions and as to the materials of which the buildings were to be composed. It is true that buildings of the 7th class were prohibited from being covered with pitch or tar, but it is submitted that not withstanding this, they are fairly and properly considered as forming an exemption from the operation of the Act, the design and object of which was to provide for the dimension of buildings, and the materials of which they should be built.

The construction contended for, being assumed as correct, the workshops and drying places of tanners, curriers, and leather-dressers will come under the provisions of Section 16 of 7 & 8 Vict., c. 84, and will be subject to survey by the official referees, independently of the restrictions imposed by Schedule D as to walls, and the question will then be whether the intended building can be erected "with due regard to the security of the public."

It was stated, that if the referees decided that these workshops were included within Schedule D, the consequence to these trades would be so great as to compel them, for the necessary purposes of their manufacture, to locate themselves beyond the limits of the Metropolitan Building Act, although the principal manufacture of the kingdom in these branches is now carried on in Southwark and Bermondsey, and for which these places are eligible both as respects their situation and the inhabitants residing there, consisting chiefly of workmen and others employed in these manufactures.

Mr. Hesketh, the district surveyor, contended in reply,

"1stly. That such buildings were not exempted from the operation of the Act of 14th Geo. III. c. 78, but only from certain of the provisions thereof, and

2ndly. That if they were exempted from the operation of the said Act, they were so exempted by an Act which is repealed as far as relates to that part which is alleged to have so exempted them, and therefore they must be regarded in that light in which they would have been regarded if such alleged exemption had never existed."

The referees determined, Nov. 7th, "that workshops and drying sheds used by tanners, curriers, and leather-dressers, are not included in Schedule B, part 1, of the said Act, as being buildings exempted by any Act of Parliament from the operation of the Act passed in the fourteenth year of his late Majesty, King George III., and by the said Metropolitan Buildings Act repealed—and that the said

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